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ARTICLES

**LIFE, LIBERTY, HAPPINESS AND JONATHAN FRANZEN'S
*FREEDOM***

CAMILLA NELSON

ABSTRACT: *This essay explores the relationship between happiness and the American liberal project as it features in Jonathan Franzen's Freedom. It investigates the ways in which the idea of happiness is structured by, and inscribed within, the form and origins of the social novel, with consequences for the novelist and the wider culture.*

Few nations have been so intimately associated with the idea of happiness as the United States of America. Few countries can claim to have enshrined happiness — or, at least, the right to its pursuit — within their founding political documents, and no other country has so remorselessly articulated this idea of the 'pursuit of happiness' in terms of competitive individualism and the acquisition of wealth. It is therefore unsurprising that Jonathan Franzen, America's best-known apologist for the social novel, should choose happiness as a talking point during his brief antipodean stop on the whirlwind tours that followed the publication of his phenomenally successful third novel, *The Corrections*.¹ During this Sydney visit in 2003, Franzen informed a solidly middle class audience that the most difficult subject matter for a writer to tackle was not dreams (readers want to stay in present action), delusions (readers want to sense a clear goal), unsympathetic characters (characters need only be empathetic, not sympathetic), or indeed, anxiety, depression, aging parents or Alzheimer's disease (all of which have featured prominently in Franzen's work), but happiness.² Happiness, Franzen told his audience, is virtually unwriteable. This essay investigates Franzen's claim that happiness is harder for a writer to handle than desperation and why — as Franzen blithely went on to assert in the very next sentence — the only writer who may have succeeded in bringing happiness to the printed page is Leo Tolstoy.

Half a dozen years after Franzen's Festival appearance downunder, it was apposite that both happiness and Tolstoy should feature as significant themes in Franzen's latest novel, *Freedom* — a novel that examines the idea of happiness in the context of the American liberal project.³ In *Freedom* the problem of happiness as a consequence of living for oneself or living for others — which is such a fundamental consideration in everything that Tolstoy wrote — is rearticulated around a more traditional liberal formula in which the idea of individualism jostles up against a vague sort of gesturing towards the concept of the common good.

There is a scene in *Freedom* when Joey Berglund walks into his dormitory at college to find his friend Jonathan reading John Stuart Mill. The allusion to Mill invites the reader to speculate that it is Mill's work that is at the centre of the novel's concerns — and indeed, Mill's brand of liberal individualism is not a bad lens through which the meaning of the novel can be viewed. In the late eighteenth century, British utilitarianism grounded ethics in self-interest. According to Jeremy Bentham and James Mill (father to John Stuart), people act purely in their self-interest and the goal to which self-interest aspires is happiness. The proper goal of conduct is therefore to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. This is what Bentham called the principle of utility, 'that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question.'⁴ Bentham and James Mill were political progressives in their day, and their ambition to ameliorate the existence of all human beings perhaps disguised — for a time, at least — the fact that utility and self-interest might not be all there is to the common good or indeed all there is to happiness. According to Bentham, ethical conduct is ultimately defined as that which produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This ready equation of goodness, pleasure and happiness flew in the face of ideas that had been of concern to philosophers since Aristotle argued that a person is not made happy by fleeting pleasures, but by fulfillment stemming from meaning and purpose.⁵

Immanuel Kant, for example, in a strident critique of the utilitarian tradition argued, 'This principle of one's own happiness bases morality upon incentives that undermine rather than establish it, and that totally destroy its sublimity, in as much as motives to virtue are put in the same class as motives to vice and in as much as such incentives merely teach one to become better at calculation, while the specific difference between virtue and vice is obliterated.'⁶ Indeed, there is a strong contrary tradition in eighteenth and nineteenth century German neo-humanist philosophy, running through Kant and Hegel to materialist philosophers such as Karl Marx — the later famously arguing that happiness is a type of self-realization or self-actualization brought about by meaningful work. Marx also attacks Bentham, arguing that 'With the driest naiveté he takes the modern shopkeeper, especially the English shopkeeper, as the normal man. Whatever is useful to this queer normal man, and to his world, is absolutely useful. This yard-measure, then, he applies to past, present, and future ... With such rubbish has the brave fellow, with his motto, 'nulla dies sine line!' piled up mountains of books.'⁷ According to Marx, Bentham was historically specific and 'could only have been manufactured in England.'⁸ Nietzsche on some levels appeared to agree. 'Man does not strive after

happiness,' he famously wrote, 'only the Englishman does.'⁹

Nevertheless, the dominant structure of popular understandings of happiness in the Anglophone world remains broadly utilitarian — and the English definition of happiness has been particularly influential in literature. In terms of narrative, it corresponds with the traditional nineteenth century plot in which individual self-interests come into conflict with one another and obstacles accumulate, reaching a crisis followed by a resolution in which happiness is distributed to the virtuous in the form of marriage and more particularly — especially in writers such as Charles Dickens — in the guise of wealth. In the sense of a writer's craft this is what makes happiness as an extended dramatic narrative impossible, as Franzen, though perhaps for different reasons, alleged. Happiness is not action, but resolution. Happiness is not plot, but payoff after the set-up of the plot. Moreover, if self-interest guides action, it might even be speculated that self-interested action in the novel generally takes the form of self-help. Hence, the dependence of the traditional plot on motivated, goal-orientated action — characters must shape the plot through their own efforts, or readers will feel disappointed. In *Freedom*, this structural problem rapidly transforms into a vision of the world in which all happiness exists at the cost of others' happiness, and all freedom exists at the cost of others' freedom.

Of course it is John Stuart Mill, rather than Bentham, who is invoked in *Freedom*. And though Mill's work wholeheartedly defends Bentham's ideas — that 'happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain', that 'actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness',¹⁰ that 'the great majority of good actions are intended, not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up; and the thoughts of the most virtuous man need not on these occasions travel beyond the particular person concerned', that there is no need for people to 'fix their minds upon so wide a generality as the world, or society at large',¹¹ — he also introduces a number of interesting modifications to the utilitarian formula. Mill argues, for example, that happiness is different to a 'continuity of highly pleasurable excitement'. He argues that the happiness of the ancients 'was not a life of rapture; but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and varied pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing'.¹² Happiness, for Mill, consists therefore of pleasures, pains, activities, and the dignity to be gained from he calls 'mental culture'.¹³ Placing to one side the stuffiness that values 'high' or 'mental' culture over what Mill calls 'low' pleasures (an educated middle class prejudice that is even to be found in Marx), the central question becomes one about what

‘manner of existence’ is worth having.¹⁴ Mill, however, does not modify the utilitarian emphasis on pleasure. The ancient conception of happiness — the eudemonia of Aristotle, for example — that places overwhelming emphasis on correct activity is too alienating for Mill. He famously articulates the reasoning for this decision in his autobiography, in which Mill recollects a bout of depression occasioned by a childhood deprived of pleasures, about which he points out that a human being might act correctly yet still feel like ‘a stock or a stone.’¹⁵ In short, Mill’s position is not a simple hedonistic one. He does not equate happiness with pleasure, as Bentham does, but he is also not austere. Rather, Mill points to the deep need that human beings have of feeling comforted — he is fundamentally an individualist, but he also recognizes the need to escape the terrifying idea of being alone, or, at least, of being alone without any inner emotional strength or resources to draw upon. Just as Mill suggests that the individual might turn to literature for comfort (in the case of Mill’s psychological crisis, it was Wordsworth), so too does Franzen argue that ‘the first lesson reading teaches is how to be alone.’¹⁶

The fact that *Freedom* is fundamentally a novel about happiness might easily escape some readers, not only because Franzen’s characters are commonly found reaching for the whisky and Zoloft, but also because hovering at the edges of the author’s own celebrity image is the ever-present suspicion that Franzen himself — like the characters he so artfully creates — is something of an egotist. ‘He is not a masochist,’ wrote James Wolcott in a not untypical review of Franzen’s essay collection *How to be Alone*, ‘he is a shrewd passive aggressive ... courting sympathy by constantly telling us where it hurts and fastening reader interest on himself, regardless of the issue or controversy. No matter what is flying around Franzen, the soft-focus lens is always on him.’¹⁷ Such is the power of the author’s image that it is difficult to prevent it from framing the meaning of the texts, with even the best of critics repeatedly reading the novels in relation to the image of the author as ‘a conflicted white male liberal,’¹⁸ for example, who is, to take another example, ‘afflicted by a strange lack of awareness’ about the world and the place of his novels within that world.¹⁹ Of course, Franzen the celebrity relentlessly styles himself as a relic from a more literary — if less literate — age. His essays of the 1990s and 2000s repeatedly allude to the outmodedness of the novel form — we live, argues Franzen, in the twilight of the written word. In the essays, the author’s solitude, and, indeed, the essential loneliness that characterizes his implied reader is constantly represented as heroic. The author’s interiority, his ‘angry’ moods²⁰ and ‘lonely’ feelings,²¹ are repeatedly represented as if they provided a kind of unmediated access to the body politic; personal feelings relentlessly appear as indicators of social progress, or more often — especially in the face of the ‘electronic apotheosis of mass culture’²² — of social perdition.

Stephen Burn, in his study of Franzen's novels, cuts against this idea that the author persona embodied in the essays provides the keys to the author's fiction, situating the novels, and the *Corrections* in particular, as part of a wider reaction against the alleged self-absorption that marks the end of the postmodern era. He argues that the *Corrections* is a novel that 'more obviously' addresses the 'idea of a real world beyond the problems raised by non-referential systems of discourse.'²³ However, a reception-based analysis would suggest that the essays form an important set of paratexts that effectively frame the ways in which Franzen's work is regularly being read, and that an exploration of the ways in which a text circulates in culture is for many critics a lucid and satisfying line of inquiry. It is for this reason, perhaps, that for critics influenced by post-structural theorists such as Roland Barthes, Edward Said or D.A. Miller, who argued that the widescreen social novel of the nineteenth century was instrumental in fostering the confidence with which the middle classes foisted their moral identity onto the rest of society, not to mention the colonised world, Franzen's most recent work possibly represents the western imperial project come back to life.²⁴ In a more limited sense, in so far as the theme of happiness is concerned, it is merely worrying that the texts do not seem to make it clear that there is, as the modern proverb goes, a deal of difference between *being* good and *feeling* good.

Freedom is a story about the disintegrating marriage of the Berglunds, a middleclass couple similar in type to the Lamberts who featured in *The Corrections*. Walter Berglund is a lawyer turned environmental activist, who is married to Patty, an occasionally alcoholic stay-at-home mum. Their marital relationship is complicated by the presence of Walter's oldest friend, the punk rocker Richard Katz, who has been the object of Patty's erotic fantasies since her days as a college basketball star. Franzen has never been afraid to float a theme with the candor of a television commercial. In *Freedom* the title of the novel — which appears in an aptly cinematic typeface on the cover of most editions — draws attention to the novel's central idea, which is to juxtapose the liberal principle of abstract freedom with the messy reality of life. It is an excess of freedom, accompanied by an excess of affluence, which causes the novel's characters to lurch between anger and desperation. Patty slashes the tyres of her neighbours' SUV in retaliation against their house extension, and eventually has an affair with Katz, whose worst-selling album is — of course — entitled *Insanely Happy*.²⁵ Walter is obsessed with apocalyptic scenarios about the overpopulation of the planet, and embroiled in bizarre financial schemes to save a *non-endangered* songbird called the Cerulean Warbler. Jessica, the Berglunds' oldest child, is better than good, a fact to which Patty seems to be oblivious. Patty is besotted with Joey, her black sheep Republican son,

who ends up selling faulty military hardware to the US forces in Iraq. Joey's girlfriend Connie self harms in order to express her love for her would-be husband. Joey marries Connie, then following an adulterous affair, searches through his own turds — a literal image — to find his wedding ring. Sundry other motifs and metaphors link the characters' lives to the novel's themes, working together to highlight the fact that all the characters in the novel are on a voyage of discovery to find out what it means to be a 'deeply unhappy person'.²⁶ Nevertheless, it is not the happiness, but the suffering that the characters inflict on those who are nearest to them that gives the novel its dimension and power. Far from being models of happiness, the characters willfully destroy their own happiness and the happiness of others. 'There's a kind of happiness in unhappiness,' the narrator argues,²⁷ not in any quietist way, but in order to point out that it is the characters capacity for endless self-absorption that is so deeply wrong with the that world he portrays.

The theme of self-absorption continues with the use of environmentalism as a device to describe how far the characters' self-interests clash with the self-interests of others. Walter takes a job with a resources entrepreneur, who is intent on establishing a chain of bird sanctuaries for the Cerulean Warbler, that would encompass wildlife reserves reaching from somewhere near Alaska in the North to Patagonia in South America. Of course, it is not only the fate of the songbird but the whole of American society that riles Walter, who soon becomes an 'angry crank'.²⁸ 'This fragmentation,' he cries, in a televised rant to disenfranchised Appalachian farmers about over-consumption, SUVs and urban sprawl, 'it's like the Internet or cable TV — there's never any center, there's no communal agreement, there's just a trillion little bits of distracting noise. We can never sit down and have any kind of sustained conversation, it's all just cheap trash and shitty development'.²⁹ This lack of regard for the common good is also presented historically, as an integral part of the American national story. Walter's father, who emigrated from the old world, is represented as just 'another data point in the American experiment of self government, an experiment statistically skewed from the outset, because it wasn't the people with sociable genes who fled the crowded old world for the new continent; it was the people who didn't get along well with others'.³⁰ The brutality of the social satire resides in the price to be exacted for the Cerulean sanctuaries. Walter's employer intends to pay for the reserves by selling coal rights for mountain top removal, or 'MTR' — literally blasting the tops off mountains — turning wilderness into wasteland, which, Walter attempts to argue, can be scientifically reclaimed. The final irony is that the plan to save the songbird eventually includes a deal that will rehouse Appalachian farmers in suburban luxury of the sort that Walter riles against, complete with jobs in the armaments industry, making bombs for American President George Bush to dump on Iraq.

Indeed, George Bush broods over the novel like a menacing Public Enemy Number One. He serves as a figure that tethers the moral anarchy of the fictional world to the larger American experience, and particularly to the peculiarly American construction of individualism, happiness and freedom. Various alternatives to the ideology of individualism are explored in the novel. Patty is the perhaps only character who possesses the gift of community building, whether as the dangerously fond mother of her children, or cake-baking neighbour. Patty, for all her many faults, appears to have the greatest ability to get along with other people. The Berglund family starts out in the novel picket-fence perfect then falls apart largely because Patty loses her capacity to mediate between herself, members of the family, and other people. Order is only restored when Patty manages to find a shaky new foundation for her life, bringing a sense of healing to her fragmented family.

Patty, however, is a long way short of a solution to the novel's political dilemmas. In reality, it is middle class affluence and Walter's indulgence that has made her role as a stay-at-home mother viable. There is also a terrible sense that, as a young woman, Patty seemed to be using marriage and motherhood as an excuse to hide from the world's grim reality. Nevertheless, at the end of the novel, it is Patty who heals the rift between Walter and the residents of the lakeside housing estate that has grown up around the old family holiday home where Walter has taken refuge following the breakdown of their marriage — particularly the family whose Cerulean songbird-eating cat Walter had earlier kidnapped and dropped off at the city pound. Patty bakes cookies, gives barbeques, brings Christmas gifts, and admires the multiple offending cats that have been bought to replace the old one. At this point in the novel, Patty has also begun to resume her role in her children's lives, relationships previously attenuated by parental self-absorption. In Jessica's life Patty does this — paradoxically — by remaining distant, restraining herself from commenting on the catastrophic drummer boyfriend or the windy-worded blog posts, by giving her daughter the space to make her own mistakes.

In contrast to the practical forms of benevolence that Patty represents, Walter's good causes are so abstract that they baffle and bewilder the reader. The novel's comedy resides in the fact that the schemes of Walter's philanthropic employer obviously create more harm than good. It is therefore not surprising that Walter's good causes are seen to arise from his own repressed anger and latent egoism. Walter himself partly realizes this. 'He was aware of the intimate connection between anger and depression, aware that it was mentally unhealthy to be exclusively obsessed with apocalyptic scenarios, aware of how, in his case, obsession was feeding off

frustration'.³¹ It is almost a relief when Walter is upbraided by his politically more palatable daughter Jessica, who alerts him to the unsavory class aspects of his anger — pointing out the reasons why Walter's televised rant to the impoverished farmers falls a long way short of being politically acceptable. Jessica too, is morally textured. Her wish to appear politically and culturally sensitive results in her asking Lalitha, Walter's Bengali assistant, to cook an Indian meal, only to be rebuffed by Lalitha's assertion that she doesn't cook. Jessica's ethical system is derived from textbooks, or so the novel seems to argue. Just like the windy-worded blog posts, her ideals are so many words. Jessica, like her father, lacks experience.

Nevertheless, it is Jessica who points out to Patty that the crux of her misery derives from the fact that she lacks activity. Earlier, the reader is told, 'By almost any standard, [Patty] led a luxurious life. She had all day every day to figure out some decent and satisfying way to live, and yet all she ever seemed to get for all her choices and all her freedom was more miserable'.³² Following the breakdown of her marriage, Patty finds new meaning in life by working as a teacher's aid in a private school. 'Almost every day of the school year, after class, for a few hours, she gets to disappear and forget herself, and be one of the girls again, be wedded by love to the cause of winning games and yearn pure heartedly for her players to succeed'.³³ The reader is told, 'A universe that permits her to do this, at this relatively late point in her life, in spite of her not having been the best person, cannot be a wholly cruel one'.³⁴ Patty, the former college basketball star, is a team player, but she can only cheer for her own team. She tries to fill her empty summers when the school where she works is out by volunteering for the city parks, and working outdoors with disadvantaged kids, but finds 'she needs a real team, her own team, to discipline and focus on winning'.³⁵ The point here is that Patty's benevolence starts with her family — her team — and doesn't really extend much beyond it. Hence, there is ultimately not much difference between Patty and the families with the bird-eating cats on the housing estate at the novel's conclusion — each family looks out for itself, each team competes against the other, each cat pounces on the Cerulean songbird.

Despite the tantalizing reference to Mill, the most ubiquitous allusion to happiness in *Freedom* is to the very different — and fundamentally communitarian — perspective of Tolstoy. In particular, Patty, during a pivotal crisis concerning her affair with Richard Katz, is both led astray — and arguably saved — by reading *War and Peace*. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that the whole of Tolstoy's work is centrally concerned with happiness. His characters speak incessantly about happiness. 'I have lived much and now I think I know what is needed for happiness,' says Sergey in *Family Happiness*.³⁶ 'Happiness lies in living for other

people,' says Olenin in *The Cossacks*.³⁷ 'My vocation is to be happy with another kind of happiness, the happiness of love and self sacrifice,' says Princess Marya in *War and Peace*.³⁸ 'I can do good, but to cancel injustice is the greatest happiness,' thinks Nicholay in the same work.³⁹ 'They haven't an idea of what happiness is!' says Vronsky in *Anna Karenina*.⁴⁰ And then, of course, there is Anna herself — 'If ever at any moment she had been asked what she was thinking of, she could have answered truly: of the same thing, of her happiness and her unhappiness.'⁴¹

Like Franzen, Tolstoy is constantly aware of the tension between freedom and happiness. Tolstoy is continually at pains to demonstrate that freedom is something that diminishes the more a character is entangled in the affairs of another, but he also makes it clear that this is because individual and collective senses of freedom and happiness are tied together. Levin, while contemplating his impending marriage to Kitty in *Anna Karenina*, for example, thinks about his potential loss of freedom. 'Freedom? Why freedom? Happiness is only in loving and desiring, thinking her desires, her thoughts — that is, no freedom at all — that's what happiness is!'⁴² Of course, it is not always that simple. In *War and Peace*, Andrey believes he has found happiness in confining his interests to those, like his family, who are similar in nature to himself. Pierre thinks he has found the secret of happiness in living for others. He enthuses about the great chain of being as a figure for community that leads him to a decision to set his serfs free. But Andrey makes it clear that Pierre's serfs have suffered from his inattention to the economic details of their freedom.

It is only on the surface of Franzen's text that that the illusion can be sustained that *Freedom* is telling its reader something similar to Tolstoy. Of course, there are things that are uncomfortable in Tolstoy from a twenty-first century perspective. Tolstoy's male protagonists are pure, hard, and upright — and they pontificate horribly upon the souls of their wives. However, his idea of happiness derives from a communitarian social justice perspective. He argues that freedom recklessly spent on the self is utterly meaningless, and that the conflict between freedom and happiness is mostly contrived. Towards the end of *War and Peace*, for example, Pierre is awakened through his experience in French captivity. 'Pierre learned not through his intellect, but through his whole being, through life, that man is created for happiness, that happiness lies in himself, in the satisfaction of his natural human cravings; that all unhappiness is due, not to lack of what is needful, but to superfluity.'⁴³ Pierre also learned, '... that there is nothing terrible to be dreaded in the world. He had learned that just as there is no position in the world in which a man can be happy and perfectly free, so too there is no position in which he need be unhappy and in bondage. He had found out that there is a limit to suffering and a limit to freedom, and that

that limit is very soon reached'.⁴⁴

Pierre's earlier embrace of ideas such as 'greatness' in the style of Thomas Carlyle — the idea that heroes are the creative force of history — merely resulted in a disengagement from life, a loss of purpose. In rejecting such abstractions Pierre does not reject life or resign himself to suffering, but rather embraces life. He begins to engage not with the world as an abstract idea, but with the singularity of lived human experience. He engages not with the world as it should be, but with the world as it (apparently, or as Tolstoy would have us believe actually) is. Hence, during the journey from Orel to Moscow following his recovery from the illness that followed his release from captivity, Pierre reflects, 'All the people he saw — the driver, the overseer of the posting station, the peasants on the road, or in the village — all had a new significance for him. The presence and observations of [his companion], who was continually deploring the poverty and ignorance and backwardness of Russia, compared with Europe, only heightened Pierre's pleasure in it. Where [his companion] saw deadness, Pierre saw the extraordinary mighty force of vitality, the force that sustained the life of that homogenous, original, and unique people over that immense expanse of snow'.⁴⁵

Pierre's acceptance of the world is not about abnegation or resignation to his own or other people's suffering (the reader need only recollect that Pierre ends *War and Peace* by plotting the Decembrist uprising). Pierre later recollects that in this period of 'happy insanity' he was 'not so mad then as I seemed. On the contrary, I was cleverer and had more insight then than at any time, and I understood everything worth understanding in life, because ... I was happy'.⁴⁶ He reflects that his 'madness showed itself in his not waiting, as in old days, for those personal grounds, which he had called good qualities in people, in order to love them; but as love was brimming over in his heart he loved men without cause, and so never failed to discover incontestable reasons that made them worth loving'.⁴⁷ This is perhaps one of Tolstoy's most powerful and perturbing arguments. It is only by paying attention to the world as it is, and to people as they are, that a truly ethical — and therefore happy — engagement with the world becomes possible.

Franzen's characters are admittedly not as spiritually ambitious as Tolstoy's. They live in an age of ennui occasioned by a pervasive belief in the reality of cultural decline. There are numerous disquieting questions almost casually thrown in at the end of the book. Walter's estranged brother Mitch suddenly appears. He is homeless, but Walter neglects to take him in. The families on the housing estate that has been encroaching on Walter's refuge begin to fall victim to the economic bust, but they too remain distant in their suffering. In the novel's final irony, the family holiday house is

turned into a sanctuary for the Cerulean songbird and the reader is forced to see, if they have not already seen, that the freedom of the songbird — America's freedom — has only been obtained by the imposition of violence on the rest of the planet. Walter eventually relinquishes his grand political delusions, but neither he nor indeed Patty appears to have progressed politically or as human beings. They simply act out the same delusions on a smaller, less damaging scale — but owing to the force of the plot's resolution the inattentive reader may not notice. Franzen attacks the pretensions behind the murderous ironies of the Bush years — of 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' and 'Operation Enduring Freedom' — but his characters ultimately retreat into the same insular middle class docility that gave rise to such delusions. This could be interpreted as a satirical comment on America's path to political and social perdition, except that at the end of the novel all the happiness gets distributed in line with the most traditional utilitarian plot. The former arms dealer Joey seems to get the largest share (through his own 'self reliance,' of course), and though Patty has lost the unquestioning love of her family she also gains thousands from the sale of her grandfather's New Jersey estate. There is a moment in *Anna Karenina* when Anna is forced to leave off reading an English novel just as the hero was 'almost reaching his English happiness,'⁴⁸ which Tolstoy specifies as comprising a baronetcy and a landed estate. *Freedom* is a little like Anna's English novel. It contains less of Tolstoy, and, well, more of Charles Dickens.

NOTES

¹ Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001).

² Jonathan Franzen, "In Conversation with Malcolm Knox," Sydney Writers' Festival, Recital Hall, 2003.

³ Jonathan Franzen, *Freedom* (New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

⁴ Jeremy Bentham, "Of the Principle of Utility," in *Utilitarianism and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, [1781] 2004), 65.

⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans J.K.A. Thompson and Hugh Tredinnick (London: Penguin, [c 332 BC] 2004).

⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans James Wesley Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett [1785] 1993), 46.

⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*, trans Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin ([1867] 1990) ff. 758-9.

⁸ Marx, *Capital*, 758.

⁹ Frederich Nietzsche, ([1888] 1990) *Twilight of the Idols*, in *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti Christ*, trans Michael Tanner (London: Penguin [1888] 1990), 33.

¹⁰ John Stuart Mill, ([1863] 2002) *Utilitarianism*, Dover, New York.

¹¹ Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 16.

¹² Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 11.

¹³ Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 12.

¹⁴ Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 7.

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- ¹⁵ John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (London: Penguin, London, [1873] 1989), 117.
- ¹⁶ Jonathan Franzen, *How to Be Alone* (Fourth Estate: London, 2002), 178.
- ¹⁷ James Wolcott, "Advertisements for Himself," review of *How to Be Alone*, by Jonathan Franzen, *The New Republic*, 9 December, 2002, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/advertisements-himself>
- ¹⁸ Colin Hutchinson, "Jonathan Franzen and the Politics of Disengagement," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 50, 2 (2009): 191.
- ¹⁹ James Annesley, "Market Corrections: Jonathan Franzen and the Novel of Globalization," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29, 2 (2006): 120.
- ²⁰ Franzen, *How to Be Alone*, 4.
- ²¹ Franzen, *How to Be Alone*, 165.
- ²² Franzen, *How to Be Alone*, 178.
- ²³ Stephen J. Burn, *Jonathan Franzen at the End of Postmoderism* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 21.
- ²⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, [1978] 1994); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993); D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Jonathan Cape, [1968] 1984).
- ²⁵ Jonathan Franzen, *Freedom* (New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 178.
- ²⁶ Franzen, *Freedom*, 200.
- ²⁷ Franzen, *Freedom*, 562.
- ²⁸ Franzen, *Freedom*, 273.
- ²⁹ Franzen, *Freedom*, 273.
- ³⁰ Franzen, *Freedom*, 558.
- ³¹ Franzen, *Freedom*, 395.
- ³² Franzen, *Freedom*, 226.
- ³³ Franzen, *Freedom*, 668.
- ³⁴ Franzen, *Freedom*, 668.
- ³⁵ Franzen, *Freedom*, 669.
- ³⁶ Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, "Family Happiness" in *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories*, trans. Louise and Alymer Maude and J.D. Duff, (Oxford: Oxford World Classics/Oxford University Press, [1859] 1998), 39.
- ³⁷ Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, "The Cossacks" in *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories*, trans. Louise and Alymer Maude and J.D. Duff, (Oxford: Oxford World Classics/Oxford University Press, [1863] 2006), 261.
- ³⁸ Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Random House/Modern Library, [1869] 2002), 256.
- ³⁹ Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 462).
- ⁴⁰ Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Richard Pevear (London: Penguin, [1877] 2006), 183.
- ⁴¹ Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, 197.
- ⁴² Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, 444.
- ⁴³ Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1206. Subsequent references appear as page numbers in the text.
- ⁴⁴ Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1206-7.
- ⁴⁵ Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1263.
- ⁴⁶ Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1282.
- ⁴⁷ Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1282.
- ⁴⁸ Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, 100.